

REMARKS

Claims 1-49 are pending in the application. Applicants cancel claims 2, 14, 26, 38 and 49 without prejudice or disclaimer, amend claims 1, 13, 25 and 27 to respectively incorporate the limitations of canceled claims 2, 14, 26 and 38. No new matter is introduced.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 101

Claim 1 – 12 and 49 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as being directed to non-statutory matter. In particular, the Examiner finds that claim 1 could be interpreted as being capable of being performed as a series of mental/manual steps, and suggests that the preamble be amended to read “[an] information entry method that is computer executable ...”. Applicants thank the Examiner for this suggestion, and amend claim 1 accordingly. As indicated below, Applicants further amend claim 1 to incorporate the limitations of claim 2. In addition, Applicants cancel claim 49 without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 3 – 12 depend from amended claim 1, and thereby incorporate the amendments to claim 1. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 101 be withdrawn.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-49 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kubota et al. (U.S. Patent 5,956,021) in view of O'Dell (U.S. Patent No. 6,801,659). Applicants cancel claims 2, 14, 26, 38 and 49 without prejudice or disclaimer, amend claims 1, 13, 25 and 27 to respectively incorporate the limitations of canceled claims 2, 14, 26 and 38, and respectfully traverse the rejection.

In amended independent claim 1, for example, Applicants disclose:

1. An information entry method that is computer-executable, said method comprising the steps of:

displaying each of a plurality of groups, which respectively contains a plurality of information grouped according to a predetermined rule, so that each information contained in each group is recognizable;

making available a group selection mode allowing selection of the displayed group and a information selection mode allowing selection of information contained in the group;

displaying a group selected in the group selection mode so as to be distinguishable from other groups;

allowing the group selected in the group selection mode to transit to the information selection mode;

displaying an information selected from the group in the information selection mode so as to be distinguishable from other information;

setting the information selected in the information selection mode as a definable information; and

defining an entry of the information when a predetermined definitive instruction is issued in respect of the definable information;

wherein each group is displayed so that a predetermined information contained therein is displayed in an enlarged manner as compared with the other information.

(Emphasis added)

Kubota discloses a method and device for inputting information from a touch screen (see, e.g., abstract of Kubota). The method of Kubota provides a means for selecting a group of related keys by selecting a representative key from the group (see, e.g., column 4, lines 14 -- 22 of Kubota). The Examiner acknowledges that Kubota fails to teach Applicant's claimed step of allowing the group selected in the group selection mode to transit to the information selection mode, and cites O'Dell for teaching this limitation.

O'Dell discloses a system and method for indexing words based on user selection of choices for progressively more complete words (see, e.g., abstract of O'Dell). The method of

O'Dell provides that information in groupings may be selectively displayed on a display, effectively providing an information selection capability for information contained in the grouping (see, e.g., column 4, line 47 – column 5, line 55 of O'Dell).

While Kubota discloses a group selection mode, in sharp contrast to Applicants' claimed invention, Kubota fails to disclose a grouping displayed in such manner that each information contained in each group is recognizable (see, e.g., Applicants' FIG. 3, in which for example the phonic grouping represented by the enlarged letter "KA" also recognizably displays the other associated phonic elements of the grouping – "KI", "KU", "KE" and "KO"). Kubota teaches displaying only one representative information key in a group as a means to facilitate group selection (see, e.g., column 4, lines 14 – 22 of Kubota). While O'Dell teaches means for displaying and selecting the information contained in the group, this information is not displayed until the group is selected.

In sharp contrast, Applicants' claimed method provides an advantage over the methods of Kubota and O'Dell, by displaying each information element of the group at the time of group selection, so that there is no doubt as to the constituent elements of each group to be selected. While displaying each of the information elements of a group, Applicants' claimed method provides a means for recognizing and selecting distinct groups of information elements by displaying a predetermined information element in an enlarged manner as compared with the other information elements of the group.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that amended independent claim 1 is not made obvious by the combination of Kubota and O'Dell, and stands in condition for allowance. As amended independent claims 13, 25 and 37 each contain the distinguishing limitations argued above with reference to amended independent claim 1, Applicants further submit that amended

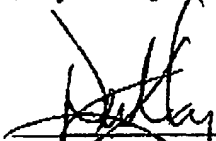
independent claims 13, 25 and 37 are not made obvious by the combination of Kubota and O'Dell, and therefore that amended independent claims 13, 25 and 37 also stand in condition for allowance. As dependent claims 3 – 12, 15 – 24, 27 – 38 and 39 – 48 respectively depend from allowable claims 1, 13, 25 and 37, Applicants submit that dependent claims 3 – 12, 15 – 24, 27 – 38 and 39 – 48 are allowable for at least this reason.

CONCLUSION

In view of the remarks set forth above, this application is in condition for allowance which action is respectfully requested. However, if for any reason the Examiner should consider this application not to be in condition for allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned attorney at the number listed below prior to issuing a further Action.

Any fee due with this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-1290.

Respectfully submitted,


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